

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 248387

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: TEL AVIV 6562

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

1. WE REGARD CONVERSATION REPORTED REFTEL AS BEGINNING OF PATTERN OF CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH GOI ON LEBANON. WORKING FROM THAT BASIS, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO ARRANGE FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF ISRAELI ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

2. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF CONCERNS WE HAVE AS RESULT OF OUR ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE COURSES OF LEBANESE CRISIS. BRIEFLY, ISRAELI MILITARY INTERVENTION WOULD CAUSE US SUCH SEVERE PROBLEMS IN MIDDLE EAST THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO
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CONSIDER MAJOR EFFORT TO SECURE THEIR PROMPT WITHDRAWAL.

ISRAELI INTERVENTION WOULD HALT AND PROBABLY REVERSE PEACE-
MAKING PROCESS, PERHAPS TRIGGER FIFTH ARAB-ISRAELI WAR
WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES (SEE JIDDA 6949), AND IN GENERAL
SERIOUSLY DAMAGE US POSITION IN AREA AND STRATEGY OF CON-
STRAINING SOVIET POSITION. AT SOME POINT WE MAY WISH TO MAKE

FOREGOING POINTS TO GOI BUT YOU WILL NOT WANT TO GO THAT
FAR NOW. FOR NOW I WANT YOU TO EXPLORE WITH ALLON IN
SOME DETAIL LIMITS OF ISRAELI TOLERANCE RE EVENTS IN
LEBANON.

3. SPECIFICALLY, IN CONTEXT CONTINUING CONSULTATION,
YOU SHOULD SEEK ALLON'S VIEWS ON FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. WHAT WOULD BE ISRAEL'S REACTION TO SYRIAN INTERVEN-
TION FOR PURPOSE OF RESTORING ORDER? TO WHAT EXTENT
WOULD ISRAEL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT PURPOSE OF SYRIAN MOVE
AS OPPOSED TO REACTING TO ANY MOVE REGARDLESS OF INTENT
-- FOR EXAMPLE, IF SYRIANS WERE SEEN TO BE ACTING TO
RESTRAIN EXTREMISTS IN BOTH CAMPS AND NOT SIMPLY MOVING
AGAINST CHRISTIANS? FYI: WE RECOGNIZE ISRAELIS WILL
PROBABLY CONSIDER SUCH A SYRIAN ROLE INCONCEIVABLE.
HOWEVER, SYRIANS ALREADY HAVE INTERVENED COVERTLY IN
ESSENTIALLY POLICING ROLE WITHOUT DRAWING ISRAELI
MILITARY RESPONSE, APPARENTLY BECAUSE GOI THUS FAR
PERCEIVES SYRIAN ACTIONS AS NOT NECESSARILY INIMICAL
TO ISRAEL. WE WANT A FEEL FOR WHETHER SIMILAR ISRAELI
PERCEPTION OF SYRIAN MOTIVATION AND RESULTANT RESTRAINT
IN CASE OF OVERT INTERVENTION IS EVEN CONCEIVABLE. END
FYI.

B. WHAT WOULD BE ISRAELI REACTION IF INTER-ARAB FORCE
IS INTRODUCED INTO LEBANON? WOULD SUCH INTRODUCTION
IN AND OF ITSELF BE LIKELY TO TRIGGER ISRAELI INTERVEN-
TION, OR WOULD GOI MAKE DECISION ON BASIS OF SIZE, COM-
POSITION, AND MANDATE OF ARAB FORCE? WHAT IF IT WERE
CLEARLY AN OBSERVER AND NOT A FIGHTING FORCE? FYI:
EMPHASIS GIVEN THIS OPTION IN CAIRO MEETING ON LEBANON,
ACCORDING NUMEROUS PRESS ACCOUNTS, HEIGHTENS IMPORTANCE
OF ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. END FYI.

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C. WHAT WOULD BE ISRAELI REACTION TO LEFTIST COUP IN
LEBANON? FYI: ALLON TOLD YOU THAT "INTERVENTION OF
ARMED FORCES OF OTHER POWERS" WOULD BE SEEN AS THREAT
TO ISRAEL. IT IS POSSIBLE, IN OUR VIEW, THAT ESSENTIALLY
INTERNAL EVENTS IN LEBANON COULD TAKE A TURN, SUCH AS
THE ESTABLISHMENT BY COUP OF A RADICAL, LEFTIST GOL,
WHICH ALSO WOULD LEAD GOI TO CONSIDER MILITARY INTER-

VENTION. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A FEEL FOR ALLON'S VIEWS ON LIKELY ISRAELI RESPONSES TO LEBANESE SCENARIOS NOT INVOLVING FORCES FROM OUTSIDE. END FYI.

D. AS COROLLARY OF C ABOVE, WHAT WOULD BE ISRAEL'S REACTION TO PARTITION IN LEBANON? FYI: ISRAEL'S CONCERN

FOR CONTINUING CHRISTIAN POLITICAL DOMINANCE COULD BECOME CONCERN FOR SAFETY AND SURVIVAL OF CHRISTIAN ENTITY ON ISRAEL'S NORTHERN BORDER IN EVENT SITUATION DETERIORATES TOWARD DE FACTO OR DELIBERATE PARTITION. ISRAELI COVERT SUPPORT FOR PHALANGE COULD ENCOURAGE CHRISTIANS TO AVOID HARD DECISIONS RE FUTURE AND GIVE IMPETUS TO PARTITIONIST TREND AMONG THEM. ALLON'S VIEWS OF ISRAELI RESPONSES IN EVENT LEBANON DOES BEGIN TO SLIDE TOWARD PARTITION WOULD BE USEFUL. END FYI.

4. WE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT SAY SPECIFICALLY WHAT US WOULD DO IF ISRAEL INTERVENED, SINCE THIS WOULD DEPEND ON ALL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE TIME WHICH ARE NOT PRECISELY PREDICTABLE. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD (A) NOTE LONGSTANDING US POSITION IN SUPPORT OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON AND (B) SAY THAT WE CAN ENVISAGE CHAIN REACTION TO ISRAELI INTERVENTION WHICH WOULD HAVE GRAVEST CONSEQUENCES FOR FUTURE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST AND WHICH WOULD NEED TO BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED AGAINST IMMEDIATE SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS THAT ISRAELIS MIGHT FEEL ARGUED FOR INTERVENTION. WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO BE IN POSITION WHERE ISRAELIS READ OUR SILENCE AS ASSENT. INGERSOLL

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